

We Claim:-

- Sub a2
1. A method of transmitting data relating to a number of different categories, from a central location to at least one remote receiver, the method comprising allocating a priority to the data to be transmitted in accordance with its category, the priorities defining a relationship between the different categories of the data; transmitting the data in a manner determined by the allocated priorities; monitoring the data to be transmitted to determine whether the data will be transmitted in a satisfactory manner; and, if necessary, changing the priority of any data which has not yet been transmitted so that it will be transmitted satisfactorily.
  2. A method according to claim 1, wherein said data is transmitted in an order determined in accordance with the priorities allocated.
  3. A method according to claim 1, further comprising, prior to transmission, compressing said data in a category if a certain priority has been allocated.
  4. A method according to claim 1, wherein said monitoring step comprises determining whether said data will be transmitted within a predetermined time period.
  5. A method according to claim 1, wherein said data is transmitted in packets, each packet containing data of different categories, the method further comprising monitoring a packet to be sent and if space remains in such a packet, the space being insufficient to accommodate data allocated a relatively high priority, incorporating lower priority data into the space prior to transmission.
  6. A method according to claim 1, wherein at least some of said categories are chosen from background game playing data, real time game playing data, receiver maintenance information, and receiver enablement/disablement instructions.
  7. A method according to claim 1, wherein said data is transmitted in conjunction with a TV broadcast signal.

Sub a3/

8. A method of providing services in conjunction with a TV broadcast system, the method comprising transmitting data relating to a number of different categories of service in conjunction with a TV broadcast signal to a number of remote receivers using a method which comprises allocating a priority to the data to be transmitted in accordance with its category, the priorities defining a relationship between the different categories of the data; transmitting the data in a manner determined by the allocated priorities; monitoring the data to be transmitted to determine whether the data will be transmitted in a satisfactory manner; and, if necessary, changing the priority of any data which has not yet been transmitted so that it will be transmitted satisfactorily.

9. A method according to claim 8, wherein at least one of said service categories is an interactive service.

Sub a4/

10. Apparatus for transmitting data relating to a number of different categories, from a central location to at least one remote receiver, the apparatus comprising a processing system for allocating a priority to the data to be transmitted in accordance with its category, the priorities defining a relationship between the different categories of the data; and means for transmitting the data in a manner determined by the allocated priorities, the processing system being adapted to monitor the data to be transmitted and to determine whether the data will be transmitted in a satisfactory manner, and if necessary, to change the priority of any data which has not been transmitted so that it will be transmitted satisfactorily.

11. Apparatus according to claim 10, the apparatus further comprising means for combining the data with a broadcast TV signal for transmission to at least one remote receiver.